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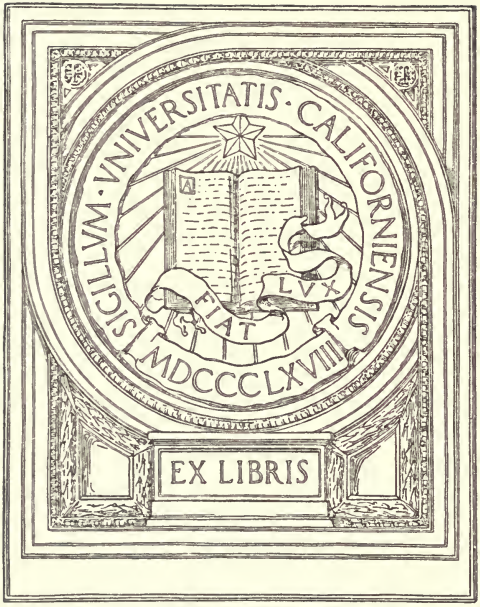
The Children
By
Chas. M. Dickinson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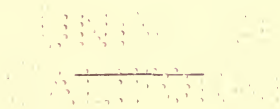
THE CHILDREN

AND OTHER VERSES

BY

CHARLES M. DICKINSON



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CONTENTS

	Page.
Prelude	1
The Children	3
In the Garden	7
The Birds	9
She Sleeps	11
Humility	12
The Easter Bell	14
Jealousy	17
The Wren's Nest	19
A Prophecy	21
The Autumn Woods	24
A Morning Miracle	26
The Lilies	28
How Far From Heaven?	29
The Desert Life	34
In Shadow	35
By the River	37
Nature's Creed	40
In Bereavement	41
Come Unto Me	46

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Page.

In the Library 49

Memorial Day 52

Eleanore 55

Night's Silences 62

The Susquehanna 63

Ulysses S. Grant 67

Of Bessie 72

A Breath 74

Our Dead 76

Heaven 81

A Winter Picture 82

Brook and Breeze 85

At Mother's Grave 87

The Drummer Boy 94

After Sunset 96

Sowing for Others to Reap 97

His Eyes 98

The Army Reunion 99

Of Pearls 106

The Church of Our Fathers 107

Dipped in Sunset 109

Love and Law 112

The Pines 115

Page.

The Grainfield 116

Night at Santa Fe 118

The Bluebirds 119

Death and Darkness 120

In June 122

The Burial of the Year 123

Does She Love Me? 130

My Burdens 132

Your Birthnight 134

NOTE 141

DEAR truants from my heart and brain,
Go forth into the world you see,
Since you no longer will remain
Content in this small home with me.

You see the smile of early morn;
I fear for you the chilling eves;
You see the rose; I feel the thorn,
That waits you in the rose's leaves.

By homes of rich, by homes of poor,
Your tender feet must now incline,—
God grant you find the open door
Of other loving hearts than mine.

And if they bid you enter there,
I pray you, sing, in tender key,
A nobler song, a sweeter air,
Than any you have sung for me;—

A song of faith, a song of love,
That like a seed of heavenly birth,
Shall float down from the skies above,
Take root and blossom on the earth.

But if they frown, and will not pause
And listen to your low refrain;
I shall not mourn so much, because,
That frown will send you home again.

THE CHILDREN.[1]

WHEN the lessons and tasks are all ended,
And the school for the day is dismissed,
The little ones gather around me,
To bid me good night and be kissed;
Oh, the little white arms that encircle
My neck in their tender embrace!
Oh, the smiles that are halos of heaven,
Shedding sunshine of love on my face!

And when they are gone, I sit dreaming
Of my childhood too lovely to last,—
Of joy that my heart will remember,
While it wakes to the pulse of the past,
Ere the world and its wickedness made me
A partner of sorrow and sin,

When the glory of God was about me,
And the glory of gladness within.

All my heart grows as weak as a woman's,
And the fountain of feeling will flow,
When I think of the paths steep and stony,
Where the feet of the dear ones must go,—
Of the mountains of sin hanging o'er them,
Of the tempest of fate blowing wild;—
Oh, there's nothing on earth half so holy
As the innocent heart of a child!

They are idols of hearts and of households;
They are angels of God in disguise;
His sunlight still sleeps in their tresses,
His glory still shines in their eyes;
Those truants from home and from heaven,—
They have made me more manly and mild;
And I know now how Jesus could liken
The kingdom of God to a child.

I ask not a life for the dear ones,
All radiant, as others have done,

But that life may have just enough shadow
To temper the glare of the sun;
I would pray God to guard them from evil,
But my prayer would bound back to myself;—
Ah! a seraph may pray for a sinner,
But a sinner must pray for himself.

The twig is so easily bended,
I have banished the rule and the rod;
I have taught them the goodness of knowledge,
They have taught me the goodness of God:
My heart is the dungeon of darkness
Where I shut them for breaking a rule;
My frown is sufficient correction;
My love is the law of the school.

I shall leave the old house in the autumn,
To traverse its threshold no more;
Ah, how I shall sigh for the dear ones
That meet me each morn at the door!
I shall miss the "good nights" and the kisses,
And the gush of their innocent glee,
The group on the green, and the flowers
That are brought every morning for me.

I shall miss them at morn and at even,
Their song in the school and the street;
I shall miss the low hum of their voices,
And the tread of their delicate feet.
When the lessons of life are all ended,
And death says: "The school is dismissed!"
May the little ones gather around me,
To bid me good night and be kissed!

IN THE GARDEN.

WHEN the night comes down
Over field and town,
And hides all the flowers and meadow daisies,
I turn my eyes to the blossoming skies,
To the far-off gardens of Paradise,
The mistletoe boughs in the starry mazes,
The daisy borders, white and dense,
And the nebulous meadows of innocence;
To the radiant spots
Of forget-me-nots,
The jasmine Harp; and twinkling down,
The anemones in the Northern Crown;
To the tiger-lily that nods and glows
In the crescent bed of the larger Lion,
The stars of Bethlehem and Sharon's rose,
And the great, white river that heavenward goes,

And waters each plant and flower, then flows
Right on to the beautiful city of Zion;
And my heart is so filled with the wondrous view,
That it overflows in reverent praises,
And mourns no more for the violets blue,
For the roses sweet, and the meadow daisies.

THE BIRDS.

TWO wood-peckers live in a hole in a tree ;
Two robins are happy in one little nest,
Because they are nearer to heaven than we ;
Though there is no room for a single guest,
Yet, they have no trouble
In making up double,
A soft, warm bed where the little birds be,
On the quilted grass of the wool-lined nest,
And under the down of the mother-bird's breast.

They lie not awake with an anxious care ;
They have no thought for their future food ;
With songs that are happy with praise and prayer,
They wake sweet sounds in the echoing wood ;
With no sin to be forgiven,
They go in and out of heaven,

Just as they did when Adam was good,
And have learned there that God sees the sparrow's fall,
And will feed and shelter and guide them all.

Apostles of song! Does the Lord still preach
His sermons through sparrow and thrush and wren?
Are you his evangels to tunefully teach
His lessons of meekness and love again?
As the skies were once riven,
And let a dove out of heaven,
With a marvelous message from God to men,
So you, sweet saints, with an angel's wing,—
Lined with cloudy pearl, or tipped with blue,
Or the red light of morning as you float through,—
Come down out of heaven in the early Spring,
With faith in God in the hearts you bring,
And the love of Christ in the songs you sing.

SHE SLEEPS.

HOW soft she breathes! How still she lies!
When gentle slumbers close her eyes.
Her warm heart sets in either cheek,
A sign that more than words can speak,—
A sign that though she is so still,
And supple is her strong, sweet will,
Her gentle pulses are not chill.
Alas, dear girl, what tears would flow,
What heart with muffled tread would go
On to the grave, with weight of woe,
If no sweet sign of life were set
In your young cheek, like a rose in blow,
Or if, like rose or mignonette,
Your breath no more should come and go.

HUMILITY.

THE sweetest things have humblest birth;
The lark in lowlands builds her nest;
The arbutus clings close to earth;
The river folds deep in its breast,
The sunset glories of the West,
And all the stars in heaven's blue zone
That circle 'round the Eternal Throne.
The lowliest vales of earth are blest
With grass and fern and shrub that shun
The mountain ranges near the sun.

No oriel-window in the East, no gorgeous sunsets glow,
No rainbow bridges earth and heaven, save when the sun is low.

The modest, little flowers that grow lowest in the grass,
Make no shadow on the earth when the summer sun doth
pass.

The rose lifts up its bud and flower upon its slender shoot,
But the sweetness of the roses comes from the rose's root.

And all the incense in the air springs from the speechless
sod,
Which has no other offering or way to worship God.

THE EASTER BELL.

THE great, blue dome that over us swells,
By heavenly breezes gently swung,
Is God's own beautiful Easter bell,
And the mighty earth is its tuneful tongue,
By angel hands on Easter rung.

Across the faint horizon's rim,---
Out where the stars in the ether swim,
From West to East, it whirls and swings,
Up and down through the fields of air,
Till all the heaven with music rings,
And it's Easter morning everywhere.

Old "Coronation" comes floating down,
Like the breath of a rose in a thorny crown,

And unseen voices soft repeat
The majestic music of "Silver Street,"
While an angel chorus chants again:
"Peace, Peace on Earth! Good will to men!"

Open your soul, and you shall feel
The rush and thrill of the joyous peal;
Open your ears, and you shall hear
Its marvelous music, sweet and clear,—
The grandest chimes that ever were rung,—
The sweetest notes that ever were sung,—
The song of the morning stars,—the tongue
Of mountain torrents, blending fine
With the windy hymn of the northern pine,—
The rippling laughter and pattering feet
Of streams that dance down their stony street,—
A diapason of thunder grand,—
The Easter chimes from the Holy Land
To Alaska's coast,—the minor tone
Of winds through tropical forests blown,—
The organ-peal of the ocean's swell,
And in the treble, the happiest note
That ever slipped from a robin's throat,—

All welded together, with wondrous spell,
In one, grand tone of the Easter bell.

Swing on, ring on, O, beauteous Bell!—
'Broidered with clouds with their silver hems,
Inlaid with pearl and lined with light,
Or the deep, dark blue of a cloudless night,
And crowned with a myriad starry gems:—
Swing on, ring on, till thy music tells
To every heart and to every home,
That is sheltered beneath thine azure dome,
The promise of love and life made known
To a sinful world, in thy joyous tone.
Swing on, ring on, till every ear
Thy message of mercy and hope shall hear;
Till the crucified Christ to life shall start
From the rocky tomb of each contrite heart,
And all the voices of Earth shall swell
The grand, sweet chimes of the Easter Bell.

JEALOUSY.

I LOVE you, Dear, but I tremble and start,
When I think there is only a single place
In all this world, and that my heart,
Where heaven and hell embrace.

When I talk with you, when I walk with you,
The world is so lovely, so free from care,
If the fairest dream of heaven came true,
No heaven could be so fair.

Things skip and fly that once did creep:
The humblest bird, like an angel, sings;
What wonder that all my soul should leap,
And struggle to use its wings!

For, the commonest weeds have a scented breath
And all the colors of earth and sky;
And there's nothing in all the world, but Death,
That is sad enough to die.

But, if one glance of your love-lit eyes
Go out to another, the fiend of Hate
Springs up in my heart, and earth and skies
Are blackened and desolate.

And beauty is crushed, and the jealous knife
Of hate strikes deep in the heart of love;—
A hate that would pull down the temple of life,
And die in the ruins thereof.

And yet, the demon that rageth thus,
Red-handed as hell and as black as night,
Has a look like the angel that walked with us,
When the world was so happy and bright.

Ah, I love you, Dear, but I tremble and start,
When I think there is only a single place
In all this world, and that my heart,
Where heaven and hell embrace.

THE WREN'S NEST.

OUT on the porch in the ivy vine,
Where Guy in his hammock sits and swings,
A little brown wren has built her nest,
And four blue eggs lie under her breast.

She came unsought; she had no thought,
But God thought for her, and so she flew
Through field and forest, to fold her wings
Where our little darling sits and swings.

Our hearts are filled with a sense of awe,
When we think that God has been so near;
For nothing less than a power divine
Chose that nesting-place in the ivy vine.

We thank thee, Lord, for th' approving sign,—
Thy gracious faith in our tender care,
Set deep in the heart of the little wren;
For this, we thank thee, again and again,
And for all thy goodness to us. Amen.

A PROPHECY.

THE dead leaves cling
To the boughs till Spring,
But the beautiful buds are swelling under;
And a thousand things,
With legs and wings,
Now wait for Spring in the woods out yonder.
The arbutus weaves
Its crown of leaves,
But beneath, the timid flowers are springing;
The sun is unbinding his golden sheaves;
Through the lonely woods no birds are winging,
But there's red in the west
For the robin's breast,
And blue for the eggs in the robin's nest,
And a silence that waits for the robin's singing.

I cannot see
A bud on a tree,
Just ready to burst with the joy of being,
Nor a happy stream
Through the meadows gleam,
Nor a rose uncover
And blush all over,
At the envious eyes her beauty seeing;
But I feel the whir
Of wings, and the stir
Of invisible things,—of the south wind blowing,—
Of the frost and cold
Coming out of the mold,—
Of the sap through the veins of the maples flowing,
The earth's heart beat
Out the life and heat
Stored up in her breast last year, and going
Into shrubs and flowers, to set them a-growing.

We shall welcome soon
The days of June
That make the brown earth sweet and vernal,
And are gathered, at last,
From the lovely past,

To form a part of the life eternal.
The flowers will bloom
From the old year's tomb,
The glad brooks sing through fields and fountains,
And the caravans of cloud resume
Their summer journey across the mountains,
Bearing wealth untold,
All the sunset's gold,
To the heavenly city beyond the mountains.

THE AUTUMN WOODS.

WHEN the frost goes mowing among the grasses,
And the wind is reaping the fallen leaves,
The sun drives out of the grim, old forest,
The shadows that lengthen the autumn eves;
It winds its arms round the oaks and maples;
Coaxes out the buds of the coming May;—
Like a child come back to its father's dwelling
It dances along each woodland way.

On the gray, old carpet, with skillful finger,
Some warm, gold patterns it lays and weaves;
The little brown birds still chirp and linger,
And break the chrysalis of next year's leaves.

Pick off the buds, O, brown-winged singers!
We can spare some leaves from our summer's store,
But Summer would never again be Summer,
If the little brown birds should come no more.

A MORNING MIRACLE.

As Christ stands close to both God and Sin,
So earth meets heaven where the skies begin;
But the air is so pure, though faint and thin,
It keeps the earthly out and the heavenly in.

THE river lifts its morning mist,
An incense-offering to the Sun;
Through countless threads of amethyst
And gold and silver, finely spun,
It trembles upward through the skies,
As slowly as a soul might rise,
Until it felt the magnet-power of Paradise.

'Tis of the earth, but out of it
Has been distilled each earthly trace;

The watchful skies alone transmit
The pure through their transparent space:
The earthy back to the earth is given,
No longer a part of the river even,
The heavenly alone ascendeth into heaven.

THE LILIES.

THE lilies do not toil, and the lilies do not spin;
They have to hold their chalices to catch the rain-drops in,
To wash their raiment white as snow, from golden heart to hem,
To justify the words of praise the Master spake of them.

HOW FAR FROM HEAVEN.

DEAR Love of mine, through whom I know
The risen Christ still lives below,
Repeats his miracles of old,
Turns all the sunset into gold,
And, with its touch of light divine,
Turns all the river into wine,
Breathes heaven's harmonics through the notes
The birds drop from their velvet throats,
Sets all the world a-dreaming of
Her ancient Paradise of love,
And brings the skies so near to view,—
How many miles from heaven are you?

I know you're near its bound'ry lines;
For, as we stood beneath the pines,
Your soul went upward in a prayer;

You raised to heaven your pleading eyes,
And lo, the gates of Paradise
  Stood open wide a moment there.
I caught a glimpse of wondrous things—
A gleam of glory, flash of wings,—
  A sense of music filled the air;
And straightway, from the opening skies,
  A dazzling beam cleft like a blade,
  Right through the midday light, and made
A darkened space to left and right,
  A shadow in the sunniest place,
And, like an angel's smile of light,
  Fell full upon your upturned face.

Come closer, Love, and tell me true,
How many miles from heaven are you?
I know your sainted feet have pressed
The flowery highways of the Blessed,
And every foot of sky and sod
To the dear city of our God.
I know you hear the choirs that sing
In the fair palace of their King;
And, by the holy thoughts that rise,

Like timid angels, in your eyes,—
Your pause to change with trembling tone,
Your native language to our own,—
By all the sweet, mysterious things
That make me look to see your wings,
I know a lovelier land than Earth
Contains the record of your birth,
  That you're a heavenly envoy here—
An angel clothed in fair disguise;
You walk the world with weary feet,
  That you may make yourself more dear
Than all the treasures 'neath the skies:
Then, like the North star's magnet-sway—
Loaned from its place, to wear by day,—
  You lead the soul from sin and care,
O'er hills where night and morning meet,
  Straight up to heaven, unaware.

And as I follow, I behold
Glad glimpses of the gates of gold;
And all my homesick soul forlorn,
Longs for the land where it was born.
No more Earth's magnet-heart afar,

Draws to itself each living thing;
The silver thread of every star
Becomes a heavenly leading-string.
Far through the sky's celestial calm,
I see the paradise of palm,
Through which the sunsets burn and blush,
And winds repeat their heavenly psalm,—
God's voice within the Burning Bush;—
And just beyond, the golden wall
Where those we thought were in the grave,
Send happy looks to us, and wave
Their signs of welcome, over all.

Some sunshine from Eternal day,
Falls here and there, about our way;
Some flowers in exile bloom to tell
The glorious gardens whence they fell;
And warm air-currents flow by me—
The Gulf Stream of the ethereal sea —
And sometimes fan my heavenward face
With a strange touch of added grace,
Like angel's breath or sweep of wing;
And we're so near our resting place,

The very birds come out to sing,
To cheer us with their song and sight,
And then fly back again, at night.

I see th' attending stars stoop down
And follow nightly with your crown:
I see the pearly cloud that brings
And hovers with your waiting wings;
And sometimes, in the waning light,
I tremble lest you fade from sight.

O precious Guide! I pray you, wait,
If first you reach the heavenly gate;
For well I know, if I pass through,
'Twill be that I'm a part of you,
And not for aught that I have done;
For all my earthly self, the true,
The purest thoughts I ever knew,
My noblest aims since life began,
My hope, my faith in Christ and man,
And all the love my life has known,
Are all your own—are all your own.

THE DESERT LIFE.

GOD pity the heart untouched by tears;
God pity the eyes that never are wet
By the sight of another's woes or fears,
By the scent of a rose or mignonette,—
Tender and faint as the song that smote
The gate of heaven, from a thrush's throat,
Yet, strong enough to bear and float
A heavy soul o'er the vanished years,
To some dear memory; above it set
The immortelles of a vain regret,—
To some small grave by which we know
The sad, sweet peace of death and woe.
God pity the life that is withered and dry,
From a frozen heart and a desert eye.

IN SHADOW.

IF the skies were all warm,
How could clouds and the storm
Weave a soft, white mantle to cover and shield
The flowers and the field, from frost and danger?
If there were no night,
How could a star's light
Have guided the wise men to the Manger?

Then, why should we grieve
In the darkened eve?
The cloud is white when the storm has refined it;
The sun is most near
When the earth is drear;
The shadow is made by the light behind it.

Through a cloud, by day,
The Lord led the way
Of slaves to the highest of earthly nations.
And the earth in her flight
Through the darkest night,
Keeps the sun in sight, or the constellations.
From the awful shroud
Of the mountain cloud,
The Father above, his Son commended;
And the world's great Light
Was received from sight
In a cloud, when he to Heaven ascended;
And he cometh again, so the angels say,
In the self-same way, when the world is ended.

BY THE RIVER.

THE sun had lit, and left at his declining
The stars, as pledges of his morning rise,
And all the river like a memory shining,
Of its far, native skies.

Thus glory-laden, its soft watchword saying
To all the piers, it crossed their shadowed bars:
And overhead, the Milky Way was straying—
A river deep with stars.

How like a holy thing, while there we pondered,
Young Venus glowed upon the brow of even!
And earth, we knew, had lost her way, and wandered
More than half way to heaven.

We knew it by the anchored moon entangled
In tree-tops on the neighboring mountain's hem,
By stars so near that all the grass, dew-spangled,
Made images of them;—

By the deep hush, as if the whole earth listened
To catch the vespers of the choirs above;
And that near sense of heaven, when souls are christened
With first, fond thoughts of love.

Ay, thoughts of love! and yet we talked of letters;
'Tis thus we mask each feeling and desire,
And link our language into icy fetters,
To smother hearts of fire.

Since then, the river's soul has gone to heaven,
And oft returned in the embodied rain,
But souls we love have left us at life's even,
And come not back again.

Again we walk by the impatient river,
  Returning to the heaven it murmers of;
And now, no more we speak of books; but ever
  We think and talk of Love.

NATURE'S CREED.

"I AM immortal!" This is Nature's creed;
She waves and heralds it where'er we go.
God shuts himself in every root and seed,
And works a miracle to make them grow.
But for his mighty touch, no flower or weed
Could distil perfume from a clod, or know
How to mix rainbow colors, ere it blow;
But for the soul's instinctive sense of need,
It would not reach its hands toward heaven so,
Or blindly follow impulses that lead
It from this sure and happy world below,
Into a future that it cannot know,
And yet, a future where it longs to go.

IN BEREAVEMENT.

IN this little room I muse alone,
Where the sweetest soul yet sent from heaven,
Twined its little being round my own,
Then flew back unto its native zone,
Leaving all my breaking heart bereaven
Of the rare, strange sweetness it had known.

Once, I wondered how these narrow walls
Could so much of heaven hold within them;
Now, I know Night nowhere more appalls,
For all darkness in a focus falls
Here, with sorrowing sighs and shapes akin them,
While cruel echoes mock my tenderest calls.

Turn the Past's bright pictures from my eyes,
Shut the light out and all sound of gladness;
What is light, while he in darkness lies,
But the cloak of Death in bright disguise,
To bring out its hideous shape? and mirth is madness.
Shut the light and heaven from my eyes.

Oh, the weight of this dead silence here!
Oh, the anguish in these vacant spaces!
Since I cannot bring his presence near,
Cannot feel the warm weight of his dear
Cheek on mine, sweet breath, or soft embraces;—
Oh, the weight of this dead silence here!

Even earth that holds him mocks my woe,
Setting bright and happy flowers above him;
While the grave within my heart will grow
Nothing save the cypress, through which flow
Winds of memory ever mourning of him,—
While the earth that holds him mocks my woe.

Oh, my Darling, shall I hear no more
  Your sweet, stumbling speech or rippling laughter?—
Hear your joyous welcome at the door,
Or your pattering footfalls on the floor,
  Evening prayer, "Good night," with kisses after?—
Oh, the moist, warm lips now cold for evermore!

Shall I never, never see your face,
  With its glory this dull pane illumine?—
Making all the street a sunny place,—
Eyes, two heavens of blue, sometimes a space,
  Moist but never clouded, smiles so sweetly human,
Yet still keeping every angel trace;—

Hair that like a golden halo shone,
  Not one bright tint lost or faded even;
With a strange, faint fragrance all its own,
Or from roses in your cheeks, half-blown,
  Look, too far for earth, yet near for Heaven,
Voice, too tender for an earthly tone.

Strange I did not note the heavenly trace
Of parentage in your rare behavior,
That I did not think the angel race
Only comes to earth for works of grace,
Then goes back again; even our Saviour
Soon ascended to his heavenly place.

What, dear Angel, was your mission here?
To make me with chast'ning grief acquainted?
Thus distil sweet anguish from a tear?—
To make plain how souls divinely dear,
Without faith or works, are shriven and sainted,
Then pass onward to some higher sphere?

Tell, oh tell me, Darling, where you are!
Just one word would ease this endless aching!
I would follow you from star to star;
I would find you wheresoe'er you are;
Cast my body off with heart so nigh to breaking,
And would follow you from star to star!

Chide me not for mourning—it is best:
Art thou wiser than our common mother?
Let the hungry instinct in my breast
Long and mourn, till tossed by its unrest,
I may reach by shipwreck, if no other,
The very country where his soul is blest.

"COME UNTO ME."

IN the night-watches when no leaf is shaken,
And earth lies still, as if the stars on high
Had so entranced her; then my senses waken,
Roused by the silence or some spirit's sigh;
And, like a voice through happy visions stealing,
Both heard and felt, and therefore, sweeter far
Than any sense of hearing or of feeling,
Fall straight from heaven as light of any star,
These wondrous words to all my soul appealing;—

> "*Come unto Me, O weary man and maiden;*
> *Come; lean upon My breast,*
> *All ye that labor and are heavy laden,*
> *And I will give you rest.*"

In the bright day when clanging wheel and hammer
And throbbing engines shake the affrighted air,
And trade and greed set up their selfish clamor,
And loud complaint falls from the lips of care;
Then straight into my inmost soul retreating,
Where cloistered Memory shuts out sound and sight,
And, like a nun her sacred beads repeating,
Tells o'er those words heard in the still midnight,
In tone of calm command, yet so entreating:—

"Come unto Me, O weary man and maiden,
Come; lean upon My breast,
All ye that labor and are heavy laden,
And I will give you rest."

O Voice majestic! yet so low and tender,
That the soft footfall of a worldly thought
May drown its pleading, help me to surrender
Each clamorous earthly want my heart hath sought,
All gain or comfort that my life hath wrought;
And, if all sense, all rest and pleasure fail me,
Keep my soul watchful of each sound and light,

That when the night comes on, and storms assail me,
And I must walk by faith and not by sight,
I still may follow through the clouds that veil me,
Those far, soft accents, calling through the night;—

"Come unto Me, O weary man and maiden;
Come; lean upon My breast,
All ye that labor and are heavy laden,
And I will give you rest."

IN THE LIBRARY.

GENTLE Jailer, turn the key
'Twixt the outer world and me,
Shutting out its care and din,
Shutting all sweet fancies in;
With such a prison and such a guard,
Who would not be Bonnivard?

Well I know the winter's snow
Folds the buried world about;
But a sweet smile as we part,
Falls upon my budding heart,
Lets the sunshine in and out,
With a few, warm tears unwept,

That some tender sorrow kept;
And anon the fond thoughts stir
Where some happy memories were
Buried out of sound and sight,
Feeling blindly for the light;
Through each tender root they move
With the warmth of early love,
Filling all this little room
With a sense of coming bloom,
Tint of rose and scent of myrrh;
And, as if the earth had swung
Sudden down the tropic zone,
I can see the pink clouds hung
On the peach trees, newly blown;
I can hear the birds and bees
In Floridian orange trees,
Where the faint, o'erburdened breeze,
With the whole earth's sweetness, goes,
Southern jasmine, Northern rose,—
Where the lazy stream scarce flows,
And the senses swim and swoon,
In the soft and slumb'rous light,
In the perfume-breathing night,

As March stealeth into June;—
All from that sweet smile that shone
When you left me here alone.

MEMORIAL DAY.

HOW earth and heaven conspire to keep
And bless the martyred men who sleep
In the dear land they died to save!
How all the forces of the air,
Of soil and sunshine gather there,
To guard and deck each hallowed grave!

To them, some gentle angel brings,—
Perhaps an angel without wings,—
A seed, and drops it in the sod;
And lo, a flower, with sweeter breath
Than anything this side of Death,
Blossoms and smiles right up to God.

Earth robes in green their burial beds,
The sky doth break above their heads
  Its alabaster box of blue—
Anoints them with the liquid gold
The purest light of heaven can hold,
  And bathes their feet with precious dew.

How peaceful all the valley lies!
Made peaceful by their sacrifice;
  The sounds of Peace are in the air:
And Freedom's angel will not fail
To linger in our happy vale,
  While her brave heroes slumber there.

Blow, bugle, soft, for lips that blew
Full many a stirring tone from you,—
  Pale lips no more by loved ones pressed.
Throb gently, drum, for hands that beat
Full many a march for willing feet,—
  Cold hands now folded o'er his breast.

Heroic men, through you we see
How nobler death than life can be,
  How Godlike, manhood may become!—
Types of the growth of Christian grace,
For, as Christ died for all our race,
  So you for kindred and for home.

ELEANORE.

WE act as though our hearts were dumb;
We only talk from mind to mind;
We keep our kindred hearts confined.
But still our souls together come.

Our smiles have lost their tender light;
Our looks are distant when we meet;
I wonder not that in the street,
Love only ventures forth at night.

It hides for lack of being bold,
Lest worldly fashion scoff and scout;
The world turns love and friendship out,
Yet sells herself for love of gold.

Why, when our hearts are all aglow,
Let man oppose the Powers above;
God made them warm with living love;
Man heaps above them ice and snow.

By every sunbeam from above,
By sin unpunished or forgiven,
By all the unmeasured gifts of Heaven,
We feel and know that God is love.

Its incense breathes through flower and sod;
The birds that make heaven's blue bell ring,
When most they love most sweetly sing,
And prove their kinship unto God.

Then, while love spans the Universe,
And runs through all that God has given,
Why do we turn our backs on heaven,
And shrink, as if it were a curse?

Why does it tinge our cheeks with shame,
  Make eyelids droop and peace take wing,
  When it's the only heavenly thing
That passed the angel's sword of flame?

I know full oft thy heart is sore,
  And sighs for something to caress;
  Yet, dares not show its deep distress:—
Why art thou weeping, Eleanore?

Ah, yes; we are not understood;
  The world's a slave to power and pelf;
  She only seeks to find herself,
And never sees a trace of good.

She brands each kiss, each fond embrace,
  With the dark signature of Sin,
  Sets Guilt where pure thoughts enter in,
And Vice's mask on Virtue's face.

She spurns the gold and hoards the dross,
And all that's pure and fair doth shun;
She spurned the love of God's own Son,
And hung him bleeding on a cross.

Why listen, then, to what she saith?
While pure love calls with yearning tone,
And Memory pleads how we have known
There's heaven this side the gates of Death.

I feel the pulses of the Past,
The thrilling of thy finger-tips;
Our souls are creeping through our lips;
Our eyes have found a tongue at last;—

A tongue that knows no worldly art,
A speech that's sweet beyond compare;—
No language can be half so fair
As whispers of a loving heart.

The evenings now are clear and calm;
The earth is bound with silver bars;
The sky is full of floating stars;
The breeze is happy with a psalm.

It tells me of the old, dead year,
When lingering by thee long and late,
I wandered half way to the gate,
Then hastened back again, to hear

My name by thy dear lips caressed;
To hold thy trembling hand once more;
To say, "Good bye, dear Eleanore,"
And—let thy memory tell the rest!

I left thee with a tender plight,
And thy young cheek all wet and warm;
And gazing on me till my form
Was lost amid the shades of night.

O blest remembrance! that still keeps
  Each word and look of soft control—
  The thrilling touch of soul on soul,
And mimic dreams when Memory sleeps!

O special charge of Heaven, to me
  Thou art the queen of womankind!
  The world may claim my voice and mind,
But all my heart belongs to thee.

Through thee it knows our birth divine,
  And thus the Eden story proves;—
  The immortal life that throbs and moves
Through all thy being into mine;—

With sense of loss, and sense of gain;—
  The Godlike restlessness of rest;—
  A little heaven within the breast;
Yet, all the discipline of pain.

My heart with deep desire is warm,
And broods o'er buried thoughts and things;
O, if a wish could borrow wings,
Or memory only had a form!

My heart the home of bliss once more
Would be with thee, my spirit-bride;
O break the chilling chains of pride,
And come and bless me, Eleanore.

O come, as in the days of yore,
And leave the world for love of me;
There is so much of heaven in thee,
Earth would be Eden, Eleanore.

NIGHT'S SILENCES.

DAY hath her sounds, but night her silences,
Sleep from the grave and Rest from Heaven come;
Earth holds her breath and every voice is dumb;
The tired wind's asleep; Speech forgets her words;
Silent as printed notes are notes of birds;
In all the earth a single cricket's sound
Makes voice more dumb and silence more profound;
While countless stars with noiseless step march through
The dome of heaven, in reverent review;
No wonder earth is awed, and through the blue
The awful silence creeps, as line on line
Of suns and planets wheel and march and shine
Around the throne of Majesty divine.

THE SUSQUEHANNA.

FAIR river that passes
Through grainfield and grasses,
By corn still a-growing, by meadows at rest;
All the daisies and clover—
All the trees that hang over,
Fall in love with their images down in thy breast.

There, transfigured they stand,
Leaning out from the land—
Over fleets of white clouds sailing after the sun;
Looking straight into heaven,
From morning till even,
And the stars that shine double when daylight is done.

Since the country was young—
Since the morning stars sung
The praises of God o'er the cradle of Time,
Thou hast flowed from his hand,
Through the beautiful land,
Never stopping to rest in thy journey sublime.

All flashing and flowing!
All gleaming and glowing!
Making music for mill-wheels that waltz by thy side;
All the flowers on thy brink
That have come down to drink,
Have pitched their white tents by thy musical tide.

O far-flashing river!
Thou art hallowed forever,
As the path where the angel of Beauty hath trod;
And it seemeth to me,
As I gaze upon thee,
Thou hast caught the grand gleam of the glory of God.

Now the sorrowful moon
Drops a silver pontoon,
All festooned with rainbows to float on thy breast;
And our hearts wander o'er
To the opposite shore—
To the hill where our loved ones are gathered to rest.

All the raindrops that lie
In the depths of the sky,
Hear the psalm of the saints that have gone on before:
And they sing it in rills,
Down the highlands and hills,
Till it breaks into ripples at last on thy shore.

O mount-guarded river!
Sail seaward forever!
Singing anthems to Earth as the ages go by;
Over willow and sod—
O'er the mountains of God,
Let thy music float back to its home in the sky.

Over rock, over rift,
As we silently drift
Down the river of Time to the river of Rest,
May the stars be as true,
And the heavens as blue,
As those fast asleep in thy beautiful breast.

ULYSSES S. GRANT.

FROM the sea-girt East to the prairied West,
The Nation is calling the lessening roll
Of heroes it honors and loves the best;
And it breathless waits for the answering soul
Of a noble son, whose life reads more
Like a fabulous story of deeds sublime,
Who shouldered the stars as Atlas bore
The ponderous earth in the olden time;
Who rode unsinged through the furnace heat,
Where the leaden hail and the hurricane
Mowed down and windrowed men like grain;
And the terrible flail of the battle beat,
And reddened the soil, and crushed the wheat,
And shattered the trees, and shook the field,
While Death stood close as the hero's shield
And took his orders, and grandly won

A way through fire and blood and groan,
For the Freedom that followed each thundering gun,
And the noblest Peace that the world has known.

We listen and wait; but there's no reply;—
It cannot be that our hero's dead?
Yet, we remember how all the sky,
From sea to sea, with black was spread
But yesterday—with only the stars
Of a rescued Union shining through.
Why drooped the flag with its shining bars,
With a band of black round the peaceful stars
He had saved and kept in their field of blue?
Why, from the Nation's eyes and lips,
Fell tears and sighs in that black eclipse?
Why did the drums beat sad and slow,
And the sorrowing bugles wail as though
They should never again on earth be blown?
Had the soul of our grandest hero flown?
Or did Heaven draw near to the sunny crown
Of mount McGregor, and set thereon
The ladder that rose from the pillow of stone?

And did the boys who had entered the grander
Army beyond the skies, come down
And rescue from Death their old Commander?

God pity us all! it must be so,
That the strongest tie of earth is riven!
And it's easier now for us to go,
Since he whose noble life has given
New love and fame to a soldier's name,
Now joins the boys who loved him here,
Under Michael's shield and Azrael's spear.

Heroes of Heaven! make a place for him,
Where his earthly fame will not grow dim,
In the blazing light of the Seraphim:—
That all the angelic hosts may know
How grand a human soul can grow,
Since Christ hath died for its sin and woe;
For, in all the years that the glorious sun
Has looked on man, since the world began,
He never has seen a worthier one,

Nor a grander record of duty done,
Nor a nobler victor of battles won;
For his heart was as firm as a granite stone,
Yet, soft as the moss that grows thereon,
And as free from the stain of a selfish gain
As a lily's petals that grow apart,
Untouched, unsoiled by its golden heart.

Ho! Orderly, from the heavenly ranks!
Make a way for him through the flashing flanks,
To where his country's Father and Lincoln stand,
Mid the martyred saints of their native land
And the guards of Freedom, at God's right hand!
Stand back, brave souls under Leonidas,
That went up to God from the Grecian pass!
And you, pure knights in your shining mail,
That went out in search of the Holy Grail,
Or to rescue the land where Christ had been,
From the hated heel of the Saracen!
Stand back, bold Swiss of the mountaineers,
Who Freedom led through the Austrian spears!
Grand Sergeant, that saw the dear flag fall,

And set it again over Moultrie's wall!
Stand back, ye heroes that held the fort
For a starry name and a grand report!
Stand back, white knights of Arthur's court!
For here is a hero brave and true,
A patriot pure, and a soldier who
Was as grand in war as the best of you;
And as grand in peace as the world has seen:
Yet, with soul as white as the noblest knight
That wept for the honor of Arthur's queen.
Go on, grand Saint, to your rightful place!
Lift your steadfast eyes to the Father's face;
For that is the promise Christ has given
To the pure in heart as they enter Heaven.

OF BESSIE.

YE ling'ring birds that still rejoice,
And sing of Edens whence ye came!
Ye would not sing a note for shame,
If ye had heard my Bessie's voice.

Ye stainless clouds whose purple grace,
The sunset heightens with its flush!
I wonder not that ye should blush
Since ye have seen my Bessie's face.

Ye stars that tremble in the skies,
Half peering through the lids of Night!
I know by your bedazzled sight
That ye have looked in Bessie's eyes.

Ah, modest Moon that sails the blue!
No wonder that your face grows pale
And hides behind its snowy vail,
When Bessie turns her face on you.

And all ye skies that o'er me roll!
Ye could not show so pure a dome,
If, in its frequent journeys home,
Ye had not felt my Bessie's soul.

A BREATH.

O MYSTERY of mysteries, deeper than Death,
The marvelous life of a single breath!
It cometh unseen, unfelt, unheard,
As the silent sense of a printed word.
And as naught in the light of a day most fair
Tells which is sunshine or which is air,
So the mighty soul lies hid in a breath,
As the invisible presence and shape of Death.
But, you let it fall on a frozen pane,
And the miracle-makers at once appear;—
Fair castles rise with their silver vanes,
The ferny growths of a tropic plain,
Bushes that bend with a fairy grace,
And delicate bridges spanning space
With the utmost skill of the engineer,

And beyond, the flowers and palms upon
The hanging gardens of Babylon.
O mystery of mysteries, deeper than Death,
In the magic power of a single breath!

OUR DEAD.

UNDER a mantle of stainless snow—
The New Year's gift of a pitying sky—
Where the sorrowing winds walk to and fro,
And the trembling trees are bowed with woe,
The loved and lost of our households lie.

Night sets a watch o'er their peaceful rest,
And around their graves the still stars go;
And the white stones stand in their snowy vest,
Like angels in robes of ascension dressed,
Awaiting the sleepers that lie below.

We never knew till the Angel made
A grave in our hearts, and planted above,
The flowers of memory that cannot fade,
How the weight of sorrow upon them laid,
Will press out the perfume of faith and love.

We never thought till they were dead,
That they were guides whom the good Lord gave,
To teach us the way to the heaven o'erhead—
That the only path to Paradise led
Through the narrow door of the lowly grave.

O beauteous earth!—mysterious grave!
How grand the dwellers that slumber there!
The world about us hath true and brave,
But the world beneath, in earth and wave,
Is peopled with heroes everywhere.

The saints and sages of every clime,
The noblest men the world hath known,
The mighty masters of lute and rhyme,
There, freed from sin and sense and time,
Have into the grandest stature grown.

The soul of Shakespeare, Milton, Burns,
Still sings; it cannot help but sing;
The soul of Wesley ever yearns
For fallen men, while Darwin turns
And reads the riddle of unseen things.

Their voices reach no earthly ear ;
Their thoughts and dreams we cannot know ;
But if Heaven is in and around us here,
Will they not choose to linger near
The hearts they loved that love them so ?

And why should they shrink from the moist, warm earth ?
There all the germs of our being lie ;
There every form of life had birth ;
There every treasure of worldly worth
Is closely hidden from human eye.

And yet to them is made clear and plain
The hiding place of the rarest gem,
The alchemy of the sun and rain,
The course of each electric vein—
The underground telegraph used by them.

They hear the music of trickling streams
That through the valleys beneath us run ;
And from the walls where sapphire gleams
Light up the rugged chasms and seams,
They see far off the central sun.

They feel the warmth of Earth's magnet-heart ;
They know the mysteries of the Pole,—
The fragrant miracles that upward start
Through shrub and flower—the wondrous art
Of touching with color a perfect whole.

And now, when the earth seems cold and drear,
Those cities of the blissful dead
Are making the robes of the glad New Year ;
The Resurrection will soon be here,
With all the beauty around it spread.

The flowers will spring from the sheltering mold,
And meekly bow to the passers by,—
With a smile from the lips that are still and cold,
While a faint, sweet perfume they unfold,
From the fragrant souls that will not die.

Through all the Summer, the grass will weave
A fibrous curtain above their rooms ;
The sentinel trees that groan and grieve—
In the cloudless day, in the moonlight eve,
With shadowy hands will count their tombs.

And buds will blossom and birds will sing ;
Life, fresh from the grave, will be everywhere ;
And the bird of Hope, that beauteous thing,
Will gather again her bruiséd wing,
And fly to heaven on the breath of prayer.

HEAVEN.

HEAVEN is so far that Thought's strong pinions
Falter and faint in their wearisome quest.
Beyond the Universe' grand dominions,
From the endless East to the endless West:
From the infinite depths to the heavens above,
Through the sparkling space where the planets run,
And nothing can follow but light and love,
To the last dim ray of the farthest sun—
The utmost point of a limitless line—
Its joys immortal and glories shine.
Yet, Heaven is so near that sometimes the whole
Of it enters and blesses a single soul.

A WINTER PICTURE.

WHEN flowers are safe in their winter resting,
(For nothing dies in this favored clime),
And birds are warm in their winter nesting,
The New Year cometh with cheer and chime,
With the fairest pledges of Hope and Time.
His is the music of silver bells,
His is the bloom of the immortelles;
The leaves of laurel he doth combine
With sprays of holly and sprigs of pine,
Cedar and mistletoe, spruce and heather,
Cypress and myrtle and moss together,—
All the immortals of wintry weather,
Into his wreath he doth entwine.

For the musical murmur of wood and stream,
The robin's song and the roses wasted,

He giveth the music of dance and dream,
And the fairest fruit that is yet untasted;
For the summer glories, faded and faint,
The brightest pictures Hope can paint.
And what can equal her necromancy,—
Her magical castles gilt and lighted?
The rarest fabrics of fact and fancy;
(For nothing she moulds is marred or slighted):
The folded bud
Is perfect and good,
The opening blossom alone is blighted.

There is no green on the oaks and beeches,
(That is the color that fades and dies).
But there's fadeless green through the woodland reaches,
And the tenderest blue above them lies—
The favorite color of wintry skies.
And out of the woods all the earth is light,
From wrecked and snowy clouds run through
While our guiding stars were hid last night,—
But what is more fair than a heaven of blue!
And what is more rare than a world of white!

How level it lies down the young Year's track,
Hiding every hint of death and trial;—
The furrows of time and the tempest's wrack.
No shadow of night has crossed the dial—
(The lengthening shadow that slanteth back,
And never, thank God, falls toward to-morrow).
No murmer of pain nor sob of sorrow
Mars the music of voice or viol.
Nothing that sigheth,
Nothing that dieth,
Attends the Year in his march supernal.
It surely seems as if God had moulded
The earth and the heavens over again,
That the millennial bud has at last unfolded,
And death and sin and the past are hurried
Into the grave of time, and buried;
And nothing is saved for the life eternal,
But the single year of all years when
The dear Christ died for the sins of men.

BROOK AND BREEZE.

WHILE I rove through glen and grove
And dotted fields of daisies,
All the heaven is full of love,
Earth is full of praises.
Here, a stream with human sound,
And the cool breeze, passes,
With the incense she has found
In the trees and grasses.

Stay! glad prattler, till you've told
All your sweet, cool places,
How you learned to sing, and fold
Heaven in your embraces.
Stay! O balmy breath of air,
Fresh from fields of Aiden,

Tell me how you've kissed the fair
Cheeks of many a maiden?

But the brook no respite took,
And went onward, roaming
Where the mill was standing still,
Waiting for its coming;—
Where the loitering river waits
For its swifter flowing,—
Where the big clouds take their freight,
Then sail heavenward, sowing
Mist and rain o'er all the plain,
To keep the grasses growing.

And the breeze went on, with sweet
Breath each brow caressing;
Then, up to blow the cloudy fleet
O'er fields that need its blessing.
Glad I am they came this way;
For, oft, when memory moves me,
I hear some notes the brook doth play,
And a perfume get, like mignonette,
Or the breath of the girl that loves me.

AT MOTHER'S GRAVE.

ACROSS the river's rippling sheen
They went, with sorrowing tread,
Through meadows that put up their green
To rival the blue o'erhead,
Out where the untrodden streets proclaimed
The hamlet of the dead.

Through cloudy vales of blue and gold
The sun went wandering down;
Each spire, and dome, and mountain bold,
Put on its crimson crown;
And a hundred suns were all a-glow,
In the windows of the town.

A little stream slipped through the grass,
With sad and murmuring sound;
On every side, grief's highest tide
Had left full many a mound,—
As if His, "Peace be still!" had fixed
These waves upon the ground.

And ever, where the streamlet went
Broad elms and maples grew,
Whose heavy shadows o'er it bent,
Hid sun and star and blue;
The heaven it saw from yonder field
Was all the heaven it knew.

But, flowers sent up the faint, sweet breath
Of her whose breath was still,
And birds right in the face of Death
Sang out their sweetest trill;—
How could they know, that had not sinned,
That Death had power to kill!

Save these, no earthly sound was heard,
No living thing was there;
Yet, something like the awful word
Of God, was in the air;
Which, striking dumb all worldly thought,
Unloosed the lips of prayer.

Was it th' assembled souls of those
Long gone, the pure, the just?
Or the all-yearning heart that goes
To them, with love and trust,
And beats its life out, day and night,
Above their hallowed dust?

Or was it Christ's sweet soul divine?
That comforts those who mourn;
And only pours its oil and wine
On bruiséd hearts and torn;
That lingers most where purest love
And holiest grief are borne.

They could not tell; they only knew
That Peace so filled the air,
It left no room o'er sod or tomb,
For earthly thought or care,
As if the souls of all the saints
Still held communion there.

And straightway, all their grief and pride,
That darkness and unrest,
When a new sense starts in lovers' hearts,
No more their souls oppressed;
For Love had rolled away the stone,
And let in an angel guest.

Then Memory ceased to paint and con
Her storied pictures o'er,
And sweet Hope paused, and gazed upon
Her future joy no more;—
The present brightness dazzled all
Behind them and before.

And, kneeling there, beside the dust
Of one whose life was given
To making this sad world forget
Its early loss of Heaven,
Love found and let them through the gate
Whence primal sin was driven.

No wonder that the happy whole
Of heaven was in her eyes;
For, years before, her mother's soul
Strayed back to Paradise;
And she was then the cherished child
Of a saint beyond the skies.

And she had longed for motherland,
Until the angels came,
And led her up the sloping sky,
Through all its flakes of flame;
And she had walked the golden streets,
And knew them all by name.

Dear One, since that all-hallowed eve,
Full many a year has flown;
And many a fond heart comes to grieve
'Round new-made mound and stone;
And two, where Death has writ his name
'Neath those we loved, thereon.

From your dear eyes full many tears
Have faded half the blue;
And in your golden hair the years
Have twined some silver through;
But your sweet soul still keeps the youth
Of the Heaven it journeys to.

And even Death has reconciled,
By adding holier ties;
For then, you only were the child
Of a saint in Paradise;
But now, you are the mother of
Two angels in the skies.

God help us to be tender of
  Your every thought and care ;
Lest you be tempted by the love
  Of the dear ones over there,
To take your sunshine from our home,
  And make their Home more fair.

THE DRUMMER BOY.

IN the battle-cloud's eclipse,
And a shower of shot and shell,
With his soul upon his lips,
Benny fell;
And they laid him stiff and cold,
In the grave; yet, why repine?
When he reached the gates of gold,
If he had the countersign,
All is well.

Hallowed is the path he trod,
And the little nameless knoll;
Earth has claimed his form, but God
Claimed his soul;

Heaven's reveille, at dawn,
Reached it through the battle's din;
When the last Relief came on,
He was mustered out,—mustered in
Was his soul.

Pilgrim clouds in mourning deep,
As they journey through the skies,
Pause upon their way, to weep
Where he lies;
But the sun when they are gone,
Glorifies the tears they shed;
And o'er him, from dark to dawn,
Stars and blue he loved are spread,
In the skies.

AFTER SUNSET.

WE do not mourn when the sun goes down,
Because we see in the waning light,
A promise writ in purple and gold,
That he will come back at the end of night.
But what if some world of beauty and bliss
Should lure him away ere the morrow's dawn?
Oh, the death and woe that would come to this—
Thus I think when my Love is gone.

But, she will not stay; she is truer far
Than the Sun with all of his million years;
Her native home is the fairest star
That lights our planet among the spheres.
But, her love for me is so fond and true,
That her saintly soul is no longer drawn
Back to her home in the misty blue—
Thus I think when my Love is gone.

SOWING FOR OTHERS TO REAP.

FROM the dawning of day till night,
In the grainfield over the way,
The son of the soil for daily hire,
Is toiling his life away.
Working, with want and pain,
Ploughing the furrows so deep,
Sowing the golden grain,—
Sowing for others to reap.

Yet, as he struggles and strives,
Weary, and sad, and sore,
A holy thought comes over his soul,
As never it came before;
How the Son of high Heaven once trod
Paths that were stony and steep,
Sowing the blessings of God—
Sowing, that others might reap.

HIS EYES.

BENEATH black brows, through long, dark lashes,
When on me he turns his eyes,
The tenderest light of heaven flashes.
As the sun from darkened skies,
Drops a glorious glance on some hill or meadow,
While all the rest of the world is dim with shadow.
And I feel as must feel the ripe, red clover,
Blushing pink to her roots, as the sun hangs over,
And gives to her only the smile of a lover.

THE ARMY REUNION.

SAY, Sergeant, have you called the roll?
Have all our comrades answered, "Here"?
We must not miss a single soul
On this one night of all the year.
Call in the ranks of valiant men
Who taught the Gods of ancient time,
That heroes are more brave than then,
And this is valor's chosen clime.

Let the bugle call ring out for all
That bore the flag or wore the blue;
That scaled the bastion's fiery wall,
That fought and bled where Logan led—
Each gallant man with Sheridan,

That bravely rode in Death's review
Where swarms of stinging bullets flew,
Where horse and rider plunged and fell,
Midst flash of gun and burst of shell,
And the thunderous tongue of the battle rung,
And the sulphurous cloud of the battle hung,
With not one sign of star or sky,
Save where the old flag waved on high
Its field of blue, its clustering stars,
Like the swarming bees in the Pleaides,
And spread its white and crimson bars,
A type of heaven and morning glow,
Above the clouds of death and woe.

Call in the line where the pickets shine!
Call up the ranks where the martyrs lie!
They do but sleep in a deathless shrine—
The Nation's hearts that warmly throb
As the guns round Grant at Orchard Knob.
Let us look once more in each flashing eye!
Let us clasp each patriot hand again!—
Ah, there's nothing below like the battle's glow
To melt together the hearts of men.

Hail, "boys," for aye, though worn and gray!
Hail, heroes of the forward line!
Who wear no star but many a scar,
Where valor set her mark that you
May pass the gates of glory through,
If you forget the countersign.

Some of you come with a crutch or cane,
With the leg that wore the prisoner's chain:—
Some with the wooden leg that shows
The life-long debt that the Nation owes:
Some wear the badge of an empty sleeve—
The chevron honor and duty weave,
And each of you proves by his answered name,
That many a rifle missed its aim.
You braved the withering fire, the smoke,
The bayonet thrust, the saber stroke,
The crimson-crested waves that broke
On the front rank, on either flank.
You charged where only glory leads,
And stepping on grand and lofty deeds,
You stole a march up the glittering arch,
Disguised in blue, and plucked and set

The stars in each General's epaulet;
And you in the battle's light that glowed,
With the point of a bayonet, wrote his name
In the warm, red ink that ebbed and flowed,
High on the scroll of heroic fame—
High on the heavenly muster rolls,—
The roster of immortal souls.

Yet, not all the blood of heroes runs
Beneath a private's wounds and scars;
For here's a soldier whose rank was won
On fields as red as fiery Mars,
Till the stars came to him, one by one,
Instead of his dying to reach the stars.
And here is one of our own brave sons,
Whose fame on a bloody page is told
By a leg chipped off by the rebel guns;—
Ah, Death is a judge of the finest gold,
And clips no coins but the purest ones.

It is getting late; but we patient wait,
For some of the guests are absent yet.

Is Kearney still at Malvern Hill?
Is Shaw on Wagner's parapet?
Does Hooker yet o'er Lookout's height,
Toward Mission Ridge the rebels press?
Does Sedgwick still in that fearful fight
Lie wounded in the Wilderness?

And where is Thomas, whose proud name
In a Nation's heart is shrined and blessed?
Is there nothing here but his fadeless fame
To quicken the pulses in every breast?
And where is Custer, to whom was given
A soul so brave, I believe that Death
Fled from him and let him ride straight to heaven,
Without the loss of a single breath.

The flags are here whose bright stars shone
Through the battle's cloud with a light divine,
But where are the feet that bore them on,
To the very verge of the enemy's line?
And where are the hands that beat the drum?
And where the lips that the bugles blew?

Ah, we call the roll, but they do not come,
For bugle and drum and lips are dumb—
The cypress waves where the laurels grew—
But Heaven's new Legion is dressed in blue.

And this forever is God's own land;
For, furrowed and harrowed with shot and shell,
It was thickly sown with the noblest band
That ever for liberty fought and fell;
And now, upspringing on every side,
The fairest flowers of Freedom rise,
And waft their fragrance to those who died—
To the grand Encampment in the skies.

Ah, Bravest and Best! Ah, noblest dead!
Who fought for Union and died to win it;
The earth is hallowed whereon you bled,
And Heaven is brighter because you're in it!
But the angel of Peace now comes to rest
In the happy land you saved and blessed;
And the skies each year draw near and near,
There are new stars seen on the heavenly shore;
Are they camp-fires bright, or the beacon lights
Set for us by the brothers who've gone before?

Your ranks grow fuller while ours grow less,
And every day our brave boys wander
To enlist with you, o'er the stars and the blue
That hallowed the flag you all fought under.
When our camp-fires are low, we trust we shall go
To hold a reunion in that fair region:—
Oh, comrades in Heaven, keep a place for our souls,
On the muster-in-rolls of the Heavenly Legion!

OF PEARLS.

WHEN day her golden gate unbars,
The pearly shells of ocean rise,
And catch the tear-drops of the stars,
That issue from their closing eyes;
And then, so runs the Latin line,
From drops of dew and rays of sun,
The little jewels swell and shine,
Till all their mystic growth is done.

And thus, I caught, in days of youth,
Thy truths and precepts, which sublime,
Were nourished by the rays of Truth,
And moistened by the dews of Time;
And now when years with onward roll,
Have passed me in life's mazy whirl,
I ope the casket of my soul,
And lo! thy precepts are a pearl.

THE CHURCH OF OUR FATHERS.

IN the midst of God's Acre, just back from the street,
Stands the church of our fathers—the church of our God;
All its echoes of song are still tender and sweet,
When we think of the lips that lie under the sod,—
Of the hearts that beat time to the old-fashioned psalm,
That shall nevermore thrill under sermon or prayer;
O souls that have entered the infinite calm,
Let your blessing of peace now descend on us there!

Here our mothers have prayed; here our sisters were wed;
Here our voices and hearts have been tuned in accord;
Here saints have communed with the saints overhead;
Here the sermon was said o'er the dust of our dead,
And our children baptized in the name of the Lord;

Here our lips have been pressed to the cup that He blessed—
The sacred bread broken—the solemn words spoken,
In remembrance and name of the Saviour of men.
When our souls soar away to the unending Day,
May they know the sweet peace that encompassed them then!

Then, by all the sweet thought that the sabbaths have brought—
By the truth that's been taught—by the blessings we know;—
By the Christians we love, that are waiting above—
By the Christians below, that are waiting to go;—
Let the spirit of strife, all our envy and pride,
Be at once crucified on the Cross by His side,
While we go on together through sunshine and cloud,
Hand in hand, to the church of our Father above;
O, how can our spirits be selfish and proud!
When the Master himself was all meekness and love?

DIPPED IN SUNSET.

(L. L. D. C.)

MY old-time Friend, cut in the dewy wood,
Through whose leaf-heav'n the sunbeams come to drink,
I've lain me down to see if here I could
Find aught to dream or think.

Here pools that bathe the foot of many a tree,
Are making pictures set in frames of sod,
And little spots of sky look down on me,
Calm as the gaze of God.

His cloudy navies creep along the shore,
With sails half-whitened by the rain and sun,
And o'er yon hill a sailing seventy-four
Fires off her thunder-gun.

Here I first saw the grassy fields grow brown;
And lo, one morning, on some gracious breeze,
A dozen truant rainbows, floating down,
Fell tangled in the trees.

And I first saw these fiery forests fling
Their gorgeous banners to the breezes' fold,
And, yester-sunset, saw them crown a king
In robes of red and gold.

With cruel spear the sumacs drew the blood
Of our dear Summer, to adorn their leaves;
And envious maples stole the sunset's flood,
To match the autumn eves.

But now they blush and tremble at the theft,
And leaves let fall with dewy tears impearled,
As if they'd still some sense of honor left,
To shame this wicked world.

How straightway, as I think, come back to me,
The summer days of glory without glare,
The all-embracing heavens, the sunset sea,
With warm isles floating there!

And sweet as changes of the church's chimes,
I hear the river rippling out its lays,
Through all that blessedest of summer-times,—
Those goldenest of days.

But frost and winds have wasted all the flowers,
And other rainbows gather in my eyes,
I cannot leave those all too happy hours,—
That piece of Paradise;

And I am praying that some blessed day,
When winds are warmer and the skies more bland,
This lovely year will lose her path, and stray
Back to her native land.

LOVE AND LAW.

HEAVEN brings love, and sin brings law;
Where Christ doth dwell, there love must be;
And if thou lovest, happiness
Will fold her wings and abide with thee.

Love takes her own sweet, happy way;
She is most pure, and has no thought
For anything less pure than she;
She walks with Law, but knows it not.

No bond as light as a spider's thread
Binds her, or turns to left or right;
She follows the lead of her own sweet will,
And walks by love and not by sight.

She knows no higher power or law,—
The one thing here of immortal birth:—
Ah, earth is too heavy to rise to Heaven,
But Heaven hath wings and can come to earth!

But, when pure Love is touched by sin,
She quickly shows her deep distress,
And straightway, looks with blushing shame,
For leaves to hide her nakedness.

The hand of Law is on her laid:
The world no more is pure and fair;
She sees the trail of the serpent, Sin,
And his death-angel, everywhere.

O blessed blindness! happy sense
Of him whose weakness, failure, loss,
Can only walk with Providence:—
Who cannot stand unless the Cross

Be near to lean upon; on him
Love doth bestow diviner things;
He sees, where other eyes are dim;
Where others walk, he useth wings.

THE PINES.

THE scowling, piney wood uprears
Against the storm, its thousand spears;
And though it bends beneath the shock,
It stands as firmly as the rock
Beneath its feet; the angry gale
Flies on it, clad in frozen mail,
And beats it with an icy flail.
The dark wood writhes and moans in pain,
Retreats, and then springs back again,
And bending thus, its willowy form
Wears out, at last, the vengeful storm.

And so, when skies are overcast,
And storms beat on us fierce and fast,
We may by bending, while contending,
Weary and wear them out, at last.

THE GRAINFIELD.

FROM dewy morn till set of sun,
The farmer reaps his fruitful lands;
And wheat and tares together fall
Beneath the strength of hardened hands;
God grant that when the harvest's done,
The horn of plenty'll overrun.

The songs of scythes and merry men,
The laughing jest and echoing shout,
Beguile the weary hours, and then,
The farmer's children have come out
To romp upon the ripened grain,
Or ride upon the groaning wain.

When twilight creeps along the plain,
The farmer homeward hauls his store;
His children ride upon the grain,
His wife is waiting at the door;
Methinks no happier home is found
Than his, in all the country round.

NIGHT AT SANTA FE.

LIFTED far up above the level sea,
Seven thousand feet into the heavenly blue,
I look off on the happy scenes I knew,
The mountain home where all my treasures be,—
Whose angel-dreams at least must pass by me,—
The narrow vale, the river winding through;
The sleeping city; down each avenue,
White as the robe of fair Penelope,
The moon unrolls her mantle; on its hem,
Shadows in silver frames and lights are set,
Like dew-drops with the moon's own light in them;
And all the rest in silent silhouette—
Save where the river shining like a gem,
Copies and keeps the heaven it fell from, yet.

THE BLUEBIRDS.

DEAR minstrels of the early Spring!
If you would nearer come,
And see the welcome in my heart,
You there would build your home.
Already you have won the wings
That are but promised me;
And all the soul within you sings,
While mine still mute must be.

Oh, for the power to lay aside
This dull and stupid sense!
To see as birds and insects do,
The ways of Providence;—
To feel far off the coming Spring,—
To soar o'er mountain height,
And keep on light, unconscious wing,
Both earth and heaven in sight.

DEATH AND DARKNESS.

THROUGH death and darkness Nature sends
Her gifts to those unmindful of her;
The empty bough breaks not nor bends;
The falling leaves the fruit uncover;
The sweetest woman, wife or friend,
Is only a woman till death impend,
And makes her an angel to those who love her.

In senseless clay and darkest night,
The seeds their little lives surrender;
No tears of sorrow dim our sight,
Save when the heart is warm and tender,—
Mere worthless tears, but seen aright,
Through larger lens, in Heaven's light,
They yet may shine with rarest splendor.

The sky's baptismal dew descends,
Alone when evening shadows hover;
Only in storm the rainbow bends
From earth to heaven, the mountains over.
The rose with rare remembrance blends
In her dark root, when winter ends—
Without one ray let in above her—
The sunlight's brightest hues, and sends
Them up to gladden those who love her.

Then, welcome night, the darkened skies,
Through which the trooping stars are driven;
The fading leaf or flower that dies
That brighter leaf or flower may rise:
The sunset clouds, the shades of even,
The little glimpse of Paradise
We catch when life through death is given:
The shadow of the Cross that lies
Along our path, and shields our eyes
From all the dazzling light of Heaven.

IN JUNE.

'TIS the marriage-month of the Earth and Sun—
Through the restless sea,—
Through shrub and tree,
The earth's heart goes with a quicker beat;
The air is throbbing with life and heat;
The West is golden, the East is red,
And all the meadows between are spread
With star-eyed daisies and garlands gay,
To deck the earth on her wedding-day.

A thousand times has she been won
By kisses of the amorous sun;
And always in delicious June;
And now, as if her heart were stirred
For the first time, by some sweet word

Of youthful love, she doth arise
With her brides-maid, the modest moon,
And hastens forth in wondrous guise
To meet her lover in the skies.

The clouds roll out of the azure spaces,
The stars go into their hiding-places,
And only shed their trembling light
About her feet all shod with Night.
Far off some envious stars look on
With a blue veil over their faces drawn,
But none of the bright orbs dare to run
Near the bridal-path of the earth and sun.

Down many a cloudy lane she goes,
Waltzing, waltzing, on her way.
Upon her breast the rarest rose,
And every fragrant flower that blows—
As she goes waltzing on her way.
The sweetest perfume fills the air
From orange-blossoms in her hair;
The richest frankincense and myrrh
On fleets of wind are borne with her;

And down the fragrant, rosy miles,
O'er towering tree and mountain peak,
She sees her lover's morning smiles
That mantle all her rounded cheek ;
In many a lake and stream at rest
She folds his image to her breast,
While many a wood and meadow ring
With wedding-notes of birds that sing
Too deep for our interpreting ;
And o'er her, all her journey through,
There gently floats and swings the true,
Dear marriage-bell of heavenly blue.
Oh, the songs that the streamlets play!
Oh, the love that the songsters say!
Oh, the sweets in the earth's bouquet,
When she goes forth on her wedding-day!

THE BURIAL OF THE YEAR.

IN the dead hush of night when the world was all still,
And the clouds lay in ambush o'er mountain and hill;
When the sword of Orion was pointing the way
The pure spirit takes to the mansions of day,
Lo! out of the East, like the sound of the sea,
Marching west with the stars, came a great company,
Over mountain and plain, in a journey sublime,
Keeping step to the beat of the seconds of Time.

As they came down the valley and slowly swept past,
They bore the Old Year just breathing his last:
And a thousand fair forms that had faded and died,
The father, the mother, the husband, the bride,

The wreckage of hopes where the tempest had passed,
The joy of a moment, the spirit of pride.

The ruler was there, but his sceptre and throne
Were left in a country no longer his own;
The hero was there, but no Juggernaut car,
Or the pageant and pomp of victorious war,—
The statesman, but mute was his eloquent tongue,—
The singer, but hushed was the song that he sung.
And here was a father, bearing solemn and slow
The pride of his life and the weight of his woe;
And a mother was there with the babe that she bore,
Still keeping the smile that its innocence wore—
But it never will nestle or cry any more.
And here was the Spring, all reft of her bloom,
The sad, silent Summer, no song or perfume,
The soft, tender light that lay deep in the blue
Eyes of the girl that was dreaming of you
A dream of sweet life that shall never come true.
For, no smile on her face, no pulse in her breast,
No rose in the cheek that her passion confessed,
And the hand that you clasped, and the brow you caressed,

The lips that you kissed, and the heart that you blessed,
Were withered and cold, and forever at rest.

But in the dead march there were anthem and hymn
That swelled from the vale to its mountainous rim;
And some were so sweet that I think a few bars
Must have gone up to God in the steps of the stars;
And I caught a few words of a comforting lay
Of a dear little maid that one desolate day,
Wandered out of her home to the brink of life's even,
And found her own way
To the unending Day,
And she never has had to be christened in Heaven,
For the angels still call her: "Our dear little May."

Storm may wreck and death may sever,
Sin may blight, but buds that never
Ope the sweet hearts in their bosoms,
Till it's time for heavenly blossoms,
They are safe and fair forever.

So, the mighty procession moved on to the West,
From the valley of Life to the valley of Rest;

And as it drew near to the grave of the Years,
While the skies were in mourning and clouds were in tears,
And the breezes of midnight moaned low in the gloom,
Like the voice of a Lazarus heard from the tomb,—
Lo! the marvelous clock in the belfry of Time
Commenced striking the years, with a clangor and chime
That made the earth tremble, and echoed afar,
From heaven to heaven, from planet to star;
And I counted and heard till it struck eighty-nine.
Then back from the West, like the flight of a bird,
In a tone sad and solemn as ear ever heard,
The wind brought a hymn without dropping a word:

I.

Old Year! Rest! thy work is done.
Thou shalt see Earth's sin and sorrow
Nevermore, beneath the sun;
Ere the dawning of the morrow,
Other hands shall ring the chime
Of the morning march of Time.
Old Year! Rest! thy work is done.

II.

Angel spirits! Hasten home!
All thy sins have been forgiven;
Snow-flakes falling from the dome,
Are a pure, white sign from Heaven,
That the gates have opened there,
To the touch of Faith and Prayer.
Angel spirits! Hasten home!

III.

Stricken Mourners! Wherefore weep?
Love is kin to Love supernal;
Death is but a little sleep,
Between two days, and one's eternal.
Earth shall bloom again, in token,
That no bud is lost or broken;
Life and hope shall take new wing,
With returning birds, in Spring.
Stricken Mourners! Wherefore weep?

DOES SHE LOVE ME?

DOES she love me? That is Greek,
Far too deep for me to know.
Do the sweet lips always speak
From the heart's deep overflow?
Can I tell each gentle sigh
Is the breath of answering love?
Are the glances of her eye
Forged by Cupid or by Jove?—
Only this to me is known,
That I love her, her alone;
Only this I clearly see,
She is more than earth can be,
And full half of heaven to me.

Does she love me? Do I know
Christ has risen from the tomb?
Or where roses when they blow,
Get their color and perfume?
Faith would have no mission here,
Hope would still in heaven be,
If I did not trust the dear
Pledges of her love for me.
Though I cannot prove it mine
By an algebraic sign,
Yet, as love divinely grows,
It believes and feels and knows.
Thus, through soul and every sense,
Her true love gives evidence;
And I clear and clearer see
She is more than earth can be,
And full half of heaven to me.

MY BURDENS.

THE burdens laid on me are light
As the breath of a child in a quiet night;
Or I have grown so strong to bear,
They seem mere shadows of toil and care,
As the heavy clouds o'er the meadows tread,
Without bending even a daisy-head.

By night, across my slumbers sweep
Such dreams as only come and keep
A watch on earth, when sin doth sleep;
By day, the glorious light is such
I wonder Heaven can spare so much,—
The very clouds are lined with light,
Upon the heaven-side pure and white,
But blue and gold and red I see

Upon the earth-side nearest me,
And new-created earth and skies
Dawn daily on my wondering eyes.

If days grow dark, if care and pain
Press close and sharp on heart and brain,
These lovely pictures still shall bloom
Upon the walls of Memory's room;
I still shall keep, I trust, the love
Of one below and One above;
I still shall keep a memory bright
Of these dear days—of how the light
On Horeb's hill once seemed to shine
Upon this peaceful hearth of mine,
And all was sweet, and fair, and good,
As if this mountain home had stood
On mount of the Beatitude;
And, thus remembering, thankful be
That God has been so good to me.

YOUR BIRTHNIGHT.

HAIL, wonderful Night! the shadows are furled
Out of the heavens and around the world,
And into your sight, undazzled by light,
All the orbs of the Universe now are whirled.
Out of the skies all the clouds are driven,
The Earth alone is to darkness given;
Christ has been sent to the stars of even,
And every one has been forgiven,
And is blossoming out through all the heaven.

In one short hour—O wondrous view!—
A glittering splendor fills the blue,
And skies are all created new.
You turn your wondering eyes above,
And straightway see the meaning of

That God is Light as well as Love;
You know why wings to light are given,
Like angels to go out of heaven,
To bless and brighten, and lift the curse
Of darkness and death from the Universe,—
Why every rainbow tint that falls
From the golden streets and the jasper walls,
Is woven into each glorious ray,—
  Why God, in every flower and tree,
And every seed in the lifeless clay,
Struggles and climbs to the light of day,—
Why even the moth in the flame will fly,
  And perish to set its spirit free,
Rather than be a worm and die,
And gain its wings in the butterfly.

As planet to sun is drawn, and draws
The star in turn, through God's own laws,
So the soul is drawn to its primal Cause.
And as even the smallest spark will fly
And spend its little life, to try
To reach the sparkling stars on high,
So every spark of the flame divine
Flies up to God in the orbs that shine.

As into your eyes falls the vestal light,
Your brooding soul starts up and flies
Across the evening's shadowy bars,
Beyond the blue, beyond the night,
Through the white atmosphere of stars,—
Out in the path of suns that rise
On other worlds and other skies,—
Looking and longing to find and rest
On the natal star where it once was blessed.

Oh, if it only could remember
The way it came that calm November
Night in the shadowy long ago!
Oh, if it only had left a sign
On some fixed star, that it might know
Its glad way back to the world divine!

It cannot tell the course it came;
Its eyes are blinded by the blaze
Of suns that crowd the heavenly ways;
Its path is lost amid the maze
Of the Milky Way, whose myriad stars

Flow on and on like a flood of flame,
  Into the everlasting seas;
  But for the clustering Pleiades,
    And the steady signal-light of Mars,
It could not tell where in the skies
The weary world in darkness lies,
  It could not know a way to go;
For, being still of sin unshriven,
No instinct leads it on to Heaven;
And yet the dreams of Heaven that keep
It longing and restless in its sleep,
The homesick sense of heavenly birth,—
All draw it away from the sinful earth.

Like a bird set free in alien skies,
In widening circles, it flies and flies,
Hoping to hear some guiding tone,
To feel some breeze out of Heaven blown,
To find some sign of its native zone,
But heareth and feeleth and findeth none.
  Weary and lone it wanders back,
  Adown a star's illumined track,
(To the only home that is now its own);

For, wherever the wing of a deathless soul
Or light can go, or a planet roll,
There is each star's faint aureole ;
And no matter how faint, no matter how far,
At least one ray of every star
Falls gladly from its heavenly height,
Falls bravely through the sun's fierce light,
Falls trembling through the gloomiest night,
Straight to the earth in her weary flight ;
Its end in a drop of dew impearled,
Like a life-line cast to a sinful world.

Dear Christ in Heaven, whose favorite star
The wise men led to thy manger-bed!
Oh, show to me where its glories are!
And lift the glass darkly, that I may see
It beckon and beam in the eastern skies,
Like a lamp in the windows of Paradise,
To lead my unsatisfied soul to Thee.

NOTE.

NOTE.

The verses entitled "The Children," are invariably credited to the author in School-books and Collections of Verse, but as they have been widely copied in American and English newspapers over the name of Charles Dickens, it may not be out of place to print the following note from the son of the dead Novelist:

HOTEL BRUNSWICK, NEW YORK,
October 29th, 1887.

DEAR SIR: In reply to the letter which MR. WILLIAM HENRY SMITH has been good enough to forward to me, I willingly testify to the fact that the poem "The Children," which has so often been erroneously attributed to my father, was not written by him; and that, far from having claimed it as his, I have written during the last seventeen years, a large number of letters, and have many times inserted in my magazine, *Household Words*, answers to correspondents, stating that the story about the poem having been found in my father's desk after his death was entirely apocryphal, and that I was altogether unaware to whom the credit of the authorship of the verses was due. I am, dear sir, faithfully yours,

CHARLES DICKENS.

CHAS. M. DICKINSON, ESQ.,
"Daily Republican," Binghamton, N. Y.

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